

Ep #8: How Loss Impacts Your Body: Post-Grief Wellness (Part 1)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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Are you physically exhausted from the grief outbursts? Let us explore a powerful connection that often goes overlooked, the profound impact of grief on our physical wellbeing.

Welcome to *Overcoming Grief*, a show for women experiencing profound grief and looking for support in healing and transforming their lives. If you are ready to heal after loss, create a new self-identity, take responsibility to do the hard things, and get massive results in your life, this show is for you. Now, here's your host, Master Grief and Life Coach, Sandy Linda.

Hello fabulous listeners. Happy October. As the year winds down, we find ourselves in that wonderful and slightly surreal time when Halloween and the holiday season slam into our stores and imaginations. I mean, over this summer when I was going for my grocery run, I was like who else has strolled through the aisles, dodging those inflatable pumpkins and Christmas holidays and then also while pondering the perfect Halloween costume?

Speaking of costumes, have you ever imagine stepping into the shoes of a beloved character, even if it's just for one magical evening? Personally, I have this vision of channeling my inner Storm from X-Men. So picture this. I'm cozy up at home surrounded by the flickering glow of candlelight. There it is, the Halloween dilemma, what to watch.

Now, don't get me wrong. I adore spine tingling classics like Freddy Krueger or even Scary Movie for a good laugh in the horror spoof category that they're in. Yep, that's my kind of Halloween night. But you see, there's more to October than just costumes and movie thrills. It's also a time for reflection, healing, and renewal. That's precisely what we're here to talk about today.

For October, I'm going to offer a four part series on post grief wellness, rebuilding your body, reclaiming your life. It's all about understanding the fascinating link between grief and our bodies. As October unfolds, we're diving into a world of eerie tales, personal growth, and healing right here on post grief wellness series.

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But before I dive deep into this transformative journey, let's take a moment to enjoy the spirit of October, the time when the veil between the planets feels just a bit thinner, when we embrace the power of imagination, and honor the memories of the love ones lost.

So whether you're here for the hair raising stories, the transformative tips, or simply to explore the profoundness of the human spirit, you're in for a treat. Stay with me as we embark on this unique journey. Remember, there's something truly magical about October where imagination and renewal collide.

So post grief wellness is a four part rebuild your body and Reclaim Your Life series. It takes you on a reshaping journey to explore the connections between grief and physical health. Our goal is to help you navigate the emotional and the physiological impact of loss and discover practical strategies to manage the everyday challenges that come with it.

In this series, we'll explore the complex relationship between emotional eating and grief, providing you with practical tips to overcome this challenge. We'll also go into the power of physical activity in managing grief related stress, which can heal your body and spirit. Finally, we'll discuss the vital role of nutrition in the healing journey and provide you with practical ways to nourish your body and soul through balanced eating.

Join us now on this journey towards rebuilding your life and reclaiming your life. Whether you're grieving the loss of a loved one, a relationship, or a significant life change, this series is here to remind you that you're not alone. So let's go on this voyage of self-discovery and healing as we navigate grief through physical health. Together we'll find a path to brighter health and more hopeful tomorrow.

So part one for today is understanding the grief health connection. I am going into grief emotional and the physiological effects on our bodies. I will also uncover the science behind these physical responses and share stories of where our grief advocates and clients found hope and healing through their grief experiences.

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Now, the process of grieving is personal and individual for each person. It's not just a feeling that affects your mind and emotion, but it can also take a toll on your physical health. Researchers have found that grief can cause changes in your body, such as impacts on heart health, mood, and the tendency to either overeat or undereat.

Now, losing someone or something you love is tough. I get it. It can break your heart literally. Did you know that grief can affect your body physically and increase your blood pressure? In some cases, grief can even cause a type of heart disease called the broken heart syndrome, which can feel like a heart attack.

So for instance, if you have gone through a divorce battle or lost your loved one, do you know how much the emotional strain can reach at a broken point? That's where you may have a heart failure, or otherwise known as the broken heart syndrome. So please, it's essential to take care of yourself during these times of grief, and seek medical help if needed.

Now, our moods, my favorite part. Our moods can have a physical effects on our bodies. When we're feeling sad, angry, or anxious, it can lead to fatigue and make us want to isolate ourselves from others. We might also start spending less time doing things we enjoy, which can cause changes in our weight and sleep habits. Sometimes we might even find ourselves over eating or not eating enough.

It's important to be aware of how our moods can affect us physically so we can take care of ourselves. As I navigated this path to understanding the profound connection between grief and physical health, I couldn't help but notice that my emotional distress had begun to manifest physically. My internal side came out of my external, my skin. Once a reflection of vitality started to portray the turmoil within. Rashes appeared on my arms and legs. It's just a painful reminder of my stormy journey.

Did you know that stress eating is a thing? When you're going through a tough time, like losing someone close to you, it's totally normal to turn to food for comfort. But sometimes, we go beyond just satisfying physical hunger and use

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food to fill emotional voids. Like when you're feeling lonely or bored, and suddenly finding yourself reaching for a pint of ice cream or a bag of chips. It happens to the best of us.

The good news is that you don't have to let it control your life. I totally understand if you've been using food as a go to emotional coping mechanism after losing a loved one. It's tough to deal with all of those emotions. However, this can quickly lead to an unhealthy cycle where the natural feeling or problem is never addressed.

But remember that eating won't actually fix anything in the long run. As good as it may feel in the moment, all those feelings will still be there once you're done eating.

My physical health took a hit when I embarked on the stormy journey of grief, navigating a roller coaster of emotions and challenges. There's no doubt that losing a loved one is among life's most distressing events. For me, it was the loss of my mother, a dear friend, a true advocate, and the heart of our family that left me feeling them and adrift.

In the wake of her passing, my world turned upside down. Sleep became elusive, and nights were filled with restless thoughts, sadness, and the occasional bursts of anger. The emotional turmoil was a relentless storm. I find myself wavering between overeating and barely having an appetite at all.

There were days when I sought comfort in foods that provided instant convenience. Those fatty, sugary treats seemed to be my closest companions. I couldn't resist their siren call. The dopamine rush they triggered momentarily convinced me that this was a path to feeling better.

But when thoughts of my mom flooded my mind, the simple act of eating lost its significance. Sunday, once a day filled with her delicious cooking and cherished family gatherings, turned into a reminder of her absence, and I often forget to eat.

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So my relationship with food had spiraled out of control. I felt helpless. It was then I decided to seek help. I reached out to a doctor hoping to find a way to navigate the storm of grief that was wrecking havoc on my physical and mental wellbeing.

My doctor, who was compassionate and understanding referred me to a registered dietician who could provide the nutritional guidance I so desperately needed during this challenging time, but it didn't end there. I realized that addressing my physical health was not just about food. It was about the holistic wellbeing of my body and mind.

So I took a step further and decided to hire a personal trainer. This amazing individual not only helped whip me into shape physically, but also became a crucial part of my support system during this challenging period. With these professionals by my side, I embarked on a transformative journey. It wasn't easy, but it marked a pivotal shift in my mindset.

When our brain encounter the unexpected shock of loss, it's up to us to guide them through the storm. I actually had a conversation with myself letting my brain know that while grief was an unexpected and wild event, I had the power to reassess and make healthier choices. I told my brain that moving our body, breathing deeply, and seeking nourishing foods were not only okay, but essential as we process our grief.

It was a journey, a learning process, and a testament to the incredible resilience of the human spirit. But even amidst the physical challenges and emotional storms, I was slowly but surely discovering the path to post grief wellness. It was a journey of healing, resilience, and self-discovery that I hope to share with you throughout this series.

All righty, folks. So did you get a little bit of a brief understanding about the connection between grief and our bodies? I know it can be complex, but let me do a little recap on here so that the connection is like the tangled web of emotions, thoughts, and physical reactions. So let me go ahead and give you the fascinating world of how grief impacts our bodies. So grab your mental magnifying glass, and let's break it down.

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So the emotional impact on the body is stress, right? So picture this. You hit with a tidal wave of grief. Your body stress, alarms goes off. It's like your internal oh no button got pushed and the stress hormones, cortisol and adrenaline, flood your system. Results? Your heart races, blood pressure goes up, and muscle tensed up like you're about to run a marathon.

A friendly reminder, the broken heart syndrome. It's that grief, cruel mimicry of a heart attack. Stress, whether emotional or physical, can trigger it, and it's pretty serious stuff. So remember, emotional stress can sometimes hit you right in the ticker.

Now let's talk about the emotional roller coaster. Grief often turns our emotion into a wild looping ride. You'll feel sadness, anger, guilt, and anxiety, sometimes all at once. It's like an emotional buffet, but not the fun kind. All these intense feelings can really weigh on your mental health and make your body feel drained.

So here's the kicker. All these emotional ups and downs might make you want to hibernate from social life. You'd rather stay home and wrap yourself in a comfy blanket cocoon, right? It's a natural response. But remember, social withdrawal can have another impact on your physical wellbeing. Let's move on to sleep.

Now, grief can be like a sleep wrecking ball. It messes with your sleep patterns. Suddenly, you're tossing and turning on night, or worse wide awake at 3:00 a.m. Sleep deprivation is no joke. It can mess with your immune system, your brain power, and your overall physical health.

Now let's talk about our appetite. Now grief can send it on a wild adventure. Some folks start stress eating everything in sight, especially those comfort foods loaded with fats and sugar. It's like your brain's way of trying to feel better. Dopamine anyone? Also on the flip side on appetite, others might completely lose their appetite. You might forget to eat, especially on days that hold special meaning or memories. Like I used to have Sunday dinners with my family, but now that tradition feels empty without them.

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So there you have it. The elaborate dance between grief and your body. It's like a roller coaster ride you didn't sign up for. Well, buckle up. But remember, it's a journey. As I conclude this episode, I want to leave you with a powerful thought. Grief may be a challenging and often a painful journey, but it's also an opportunity for growth and renewal. Through understanding the connections between our emotional wellbeing and our physical health, we can find hope and healing.

So stay tuned for our next episode where I'll tackle a common challenge. Oh, it's gonna be a good one too. Emotional eating and grief where I'll share stories and strategies and tips to navigate this emotional eating roller coaster. So dear listeners, remember that you are not alone as we embark on this exploration of post grief wellness.

Together we'll uncover the profound connections between grief and our bodies and find hope and healing and wellness along the way. Thank you so much for listening and get ready for the next week's episode. The whole month of October is on health and wellness, post grief wellness. Thank you all for listening. Bye.

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